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WORK DAY

-USSR-

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WORKERS' FREE TIME UNDER CONDITIONS OF THE SHORTENED
WORK DAY

[Following is the translation of an article by V. Bolgov and I. Chernov in Voprosy Ekonomiki No. 2, Moscow, February 1961, pages 158-160.]

A conference on the problem "The Free Time of the Workers Under Conditions of a Shortened Work Day" took place in Stalinsk (Kemerovskaya Oblast) towards the end of 1960. This conference which was conducted by the Institute of Economics and Organization of Industrial Production of the Siberian Department of the Academy of Sciences USSR and by the Kemerovskiy oblast committee of the CPSU along with the Department of Economic, Philosophical and Legal Sciences of the Academy of Sciences USSR, the Central Statistical Administration RSFSR and the Scientific Research Labor Institute, it included the participation of party, komsomol, soviet, trade union and scientific workers, representatives of the national economic soviets and of industrial enterprises and production innovators.

The participants of the conference were confronted with a task of summarizing the experience yielded by work on increasing the free time of workers and of organizing its rational utilization, to discuss and adopt resolution on the problem of methods to be used in studying the free time, including leisure time on the basis of research accomplished by the Institute of Economics and Organization of Industrial Production of the Siberian Department of the Academy of Sciences USSR, the Central Statistical Administration RSFSR and the Scientific Research Labor Institute.

G. A. Prudenskiy, the director of the Institute of Economics and Organization of Industrial Production of the Siberian Department of the Academy of the Sciences USSR, a corresponding member of the Academy of Sciences USSR presented a report. As a result of the realization of a number of measures by the party and the government, he stated, the workers of the USSR will in the near future have the shortest work day in the world. An even decrease in the length of the work day in our country is one of the principal sources for the increase in leisure for the workers. The increase in leisure, and its rational utilization are one of the characteristic features of the development of socialist society, that is travelling along a path towards communism; it is one of the most important indices of the level of spiritual development and material welfare of the members of

society. Our economic science achieved considerable successes in studying the work time, but the free time of the workers along with the associated problems are still inadequately studied. Therefore it is becoming constantly more evident that it is necessary to study not only the utilization of the work time but of the free time by the workers.

The lecturer shed some light on the changes that have taken place in the utilization of leisure time, as well as the sources and methods for increasing it within the limits of the free time. A comparison of the time budgets of workers on the basis of data for the 20's with that of 1956-1959 shows that the free time is being increasingly used by the workers for cultural rest, the satisfaction of spiritual demands and the rearing of children. The movement of crash workers and brigades of communist labor have a great influence on the utilization of free time. The members of 30 brigades of communist labor surveyed in Siberia, for example, devote considerably more time than the other workers, to study and common labor (four to five times more), to the reading of newspapers, magazines and literature (two times more). Differences in the structure of free time for men and women have decreased considerably.

Comrade Pruienskiy proposed the following classification for free time of the workers: the time, associated with work in production but not forming a part of the work time (transportation to and from the place of work, washing and changing clothes); time used for household chores and personal service in the household and in the utilization of communal services; time spent on sleeping and eating; leisure time (study, increasing the skill level, self training and the bringing up of children, social work, rest, sport activities, etc.). In accordance with this classification leisure time represents only a part of the workers' free time.

The report cited data on the expenditure of free time of the workers in Siberia during the past several years. During workdays the daily schedule of the workers is approximately as follows: free time -- 15-20%; time associated with work in production but not forming a part of the work time -- 12%-15%; time for sleeping and eating -- 45%-50%; time used for household chores and personal service -- 23%-25%. The leisure time within the limits of free time may be basically increased by decreasing the time spent on household chores. Such an increase may be attained by improving the cultural-daily living and medical servicing of the population, the activities of trading enterprises, public food service, operation of the city transportation system, etc.

In conclusion the lecturer underscored the necessity of conducting mass time budget surveys and the study of individual expenditures of free time, which must be conducted not only by

the scientific institutions, but by the trade unions, organs of the Central Statistical Administration and enterprises. During 1958-1959 such investigations were conducted at Novosibirsk (Institute of Economics and Organization of Industrial Production, Siberian Department of the Academy of Sciences USSR) and at Krasnoyarsk (Higher Party School) at Stalinsk (Siberian Metallurgical Institute). The total number of time budgets that were studied during the past two years just in Siberia and the Urals amounts to approximately 17,000.

M. T. Iovchuk, a corresponding member of the Academy of Sciences USSR in his report entitled "The Building of Communism and the Spiritual Culture of the Soviet Man," pointed out that the constant and even decrease in the length of the work day that is being conducted in the USSR along with an increase in the amount of free time create widespread possibilities for a further upsurge in the cultural-technical level of the Soviet people, for a multilateral development of the personality. Successes of the socialist cultural revolution of the USSR, the basic change in the spiritual demeanor of the Soviet people by no means signifies that the tasks of the cultural revolution have been fulfilled and that it may be considered completed. The communist stage of the cultural revolution presupposes a type of variegated cultural-technical development of the workers, which would assure their development to the level of specialists with a secondary specialized education and then to a level equivalent to that of specialists with a higher education.

As a means for resolving this task the lecturer proposed the immediate introduction in certain professions at industrial enterprises, sovkhozes, etc., a certain general education minimum level, such as that already introduced at a number of enterprises (the Kuznetsk metallurgical combine, the Nizhnetagil'skiy metallurgical enterprise and others). The next stage is the broad and capable organization, on a voluntary basis, of general educational and production-technical training of the workers. In the future this may also be applied to the kolkhozes.

Comrade Nikitin, secretary of the Kemerovskiy oblast committee of the CPSU told of the experience gained in work of the Kemerovskiy oblast party organization in the fulfillment of the decisions of the 21st Congress of the CPSU regarding the further rise in the material welfare and cultural level of the workers. Not all of the impending tasks have been fully resolved, but the party, soviet and trade union organizations as well as the economic directors must not lose sight of the problems associated with a rational utilization of the free time, including leisure time of the workers, which is a necessary condition for a further growth in the cultural level of our people. V. G. Kozhevnikov, the first deputy chairman of the Kemerovskiy sovnarkhoz summarized the results of transferring to a shortened workday of

the oblast's industry. In preparing for this transfer the enterprises developed and implemented measures for perfecting technological processes and the organization of labor, as well as measures for improving industrial training of the workers in accordance with the increased demands of the new rate-skill handbooks. The norms of production were reviewed at a number of industrial enterprises. Along with that measures were undertaken to improve the protection of labor and safety measures, as well as the public food service, city transportation and trade.

The practical activities of the sovnarkhozes devote considerable attention to the curtailment of the expenditure of time associated with production. Investigations of the structure of these expenditures indicate that they are greatest in the case of mine and shaft workers, who are engaged in underground work. In those areas, however, where a struggle for curtailing such expenditures is taking place, they are significantly shorter; the "Polysayevskaya-2" shaft of communist labor is an example. Here, under analogous conditions, the miners have more time for studies, rest, and the upbringing of children. Almost all of the workers are engaged in studies; every miner's family subscribes to newspapers and magazines. At the present time measures are being undertaken at Kuzbass to implement the experience of the "Polysayevskaya-2" shaft into other shafts.

I. V. Rebov, secretary of the Kemerovskiy oblast council of trade unions, talked of the necessity of curtailing to the utmost all of the irrational expenditures of time outside of production and, in connection with that, introduced a number of concrete suggestions.

S. P. Ageyev, the director of the "Polykhayevskaya-2" shaft, indicated the close relationship between free time and work time, and pointed out the great significance of a rational organization of labor. As a result of the conduct of a number of measures, the miners of the "Polykhayevskaya-2" shaft spend 40-60 minutes less en route from and to work than the workers at other shafts.

Interesting data regarding the significance of free time for increasing the creative activity of the engineering-technical workers was cited by A. I. Borodulin, chief engineer of the Kuznetsk metallurgical combine. During a seven year period the productivity of labor at the combine must increase by 58%. A decrease in the duration of the workday, a decrease in all types of expenditures of time before and after work permitted the engineers-technicians to devote more time to problems of rationalization and inventions. At the present time 60% of all the engineering-technical workers of the combine are engaged in the perfection of technological processes. Over a nine month period of 1960 the savings that resulted from the implementation of their suggestions amounted to 24,314 thousand rubles.

The great practical significance of the problems discussed at the conference were the topic of lectures by I. L. Lubenikov, the first secretary of the Kemerovskiy oblast CPSU; by academician M. B. Mitin; V. T. Parshin the representative of the VTsSPS (Vsesoyuznyy Tsentral'nyy Soyuz Profsoyuzov--All-Union Central Council of Trade Unions); A. I. Sidlyarenko, the chairman of the Central Statistical Administration RSFSR Department; A. P. Gorbunov, secretary of the Novosibirsk oblast committee of the VLKSM (Vsesoyuznyy Leninskiy Kommunisticheskiy Soyuz Molodezhi--All-Union Lenin's Young Communist League); Z. V. Kuzmina, secretary of the city committee of the CPSU, Stalinsk; L. D. Golosov, secretary of the city committee of the CPSU, Leninsk-Kuznetsk; communist labor brigade leaders of the brigades from the "Baydayevskiye Uklony" shaft, L. A. Leynish; P. I. Kal'ko of the Novosibirsk sewing factory imeni TsK seamstresses' trade union and others. The participants of the conference expressed a wish that the problem of free time would occupy not only the economists but representatives of other social sciences--philosophers, lawyers and historians.

The reports and lectures heard at the conference indicated that an increase in the free time and its rational utilization have a strong influence on the increase in the working abilities of the workers and in the productivity of their labor. With regard to that, even at the present time, an insistent need for the constant accounting and study of the significance of the rational utilization of free time by the workers in the social and economic life of our country, is emerging.

The unanimously approved decision adopted by the conference, underlining the organic and inseparable relationship of the problem of free time with the basic problems of the organization of labor at the socialist industrial enterprises; it summarized the practical experience gained in the struggle for increasing the amount of free time available to the workers by decreasing the time used in various types of irrational expenditures of free time. The conference adopted recommendations regarding the methods for conducting further investigations of the workers' free time.